

The Art of Ethics Bowl

Lesson 10: Ethics-in-Action Project

Overview: (50 minute lesson)

In this lesson, students will brainstorm and discuss a civic action project that aligns with a specific ethical dilemma in their community, school, city, or state. Students will brainstorm potential needs in their community, use ethical frameworks to analyze the situation, and plan a civic action or response to the issue. They will then work together to carry out that plan in an effort to create change.

Student Learning Goals:

We will...

- Investigate, analyze, and identify a key issue in our community, school, city, or state worth addressing
- Plan an appropriate action to address a civic issue
- Create a timeline and action plan to carry out civic action

Materials:

- [News Article on Student Protests on Book Bans](#)
- [Ethics-in-Action Planning Document](#)

Preparation before lesson:

- Print the "News Article" for students
- Print the "Ethics-in-Action" Planning Document

How will this help in Ethics Bowl?

This will help your team...

- Develop clear and systematic primary presentations
- Identify central moral dimensions and ethical tensions
- Support positions with moral reasoning
- Develop awareness of different viewpoints
- Thoughtfully consider opposing perspectives

Lesson Facilitation:

1. Allow students 7-10 minutes to read the news article about student protests on book bans.
2. Discuss reactions, questions, or connections to the article:
 - a. What surprised you about this article?
 - b. What stuck with you?
 - c. Are there any similar issues in our schools or communities?
 - d. Has anyone in our school or community taken action like these students?
 - e. How effective was their civic action? What else needs to be done in their community?
 - f. Are there any issues in our community worth addressing? What needs to be done?
3. After students talk a bit about issues in their own community worth addressing, transition to the ["Ethics-in-Action" planning document](#) and reinforce that they have a chance to take action as a student organization that is dedicated to ethics.
4. Depending on your time and meeting schedule, choose one of the following:
 - a. **ONE SESSION (Step 1 - Brainstorming only)**
 - i. If your students have limited time and/or capacity, complete step 1 of this organizer with them. It may take the rest of your meeting to brainstorm their answers to this list.
 - ii. Students can complete this in groups or individually. Support them as they approach a community issue and offer support and guidance where you see fit.

- iii. At the end of the meeting, have each student share about the issue they believe needs to be changed in their community. Allow the team to brainstorm actions that might help that individual or group carry out their change.
- iv. If students want to pursue their civic action, steps 2-4 are designed to help.

b. MULTIPLE SESSIONS (Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4)

- i. If you have time, consistency, and passion from your team to do more than just “discuss ethics,” then you might want to set this as a capstone where students get to plan and carry out an action project over the course of a few weeks. Here’s an example timeline:
- ii. Week 1: Complete step 1 with students
 - 1. Discuss issues that students have raised and either move forward with individual action projects or group action projects depending on student interest / need.
- iii. Week 2: Complete steps 2 and 3 with students
 - 1. Plan the actions that your individual students or groups will take.
 - 2. This will take time and help you plan the rest of your timeline on step 3. Organize the timeline with deadlines so that students are accountable, and so you have an idea of how to support them along the way.
- iv. Week 3: Complete step 4
 - 1. Step 4 is open-ended because your students may come up with differing civic actions. Essentially, this would be a “workshop and revision” day. For example, if they were writing a letter to their school board, this would be a great time for them to get feedback from you and their team members about what can be modified before their action takes place.
- v. Reflections: Complete step 5
 - 1. If your students plan and carry out their action, make sure to meet up after and reflect on their experience: What went well? What was difficult? What could be done in the future? What outcome was achieved? Are there follow-up actions that can be done?

OTHER RESOURCES:

Below are some resources that might be useful if you are interested in making the “Ethics-in-Action” project a bigger part of your Ethics Bowl team. These resources offer more in-depth procedures for carrying out “civic” actions, but essentially, they are focused on the same goals:

- [Democratic Knowledge Project - Student Led Civics Project](#)
- [Facing History & Ourselves - 10 Questions for Young Changemakers Lesson](#) (NOTE: This is similar to the first resources, but it focuses a bit more on “past, present, and future” activism and civic action. Might be appealing to history teachers or students with a passion for history!)